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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/45/L.49)]

45/264. Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 45/177 of 19 December 1990, on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, and other relevant resolutions,

1. Adopts the text contained in the annex to the present resolution, including the basic principles and guidelines, goals and measures, as well as issues to be addressed in the future, for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations addressed to him in the annex to the present resolution and to report thereon as proposed;

3. Invites the specialized agencies, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement, as appropriate, those recommendations within their respective spheres of competence;

4. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session an item entitled "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields".

75th plenary meeting
13 May 1991

ANNEX

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

1. Given the role of the United Nations in the economic, social and related sectors as set out in the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 55, the overall objective of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields is defined in resolution 45/177 adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 1990. In paragraph 3 of the resolution, the Assembly "stresses the need for more effective and efficient functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields in order to be more responsive to the needs of enhancing international economic cooperation and promoting the development of the developing countries". The restructuring and revitalization process should also take account of Assembly resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977 and 41/213 of 19 December 1986, and other relevant resolutions.

2. The objective in paragraph 1 of the present annex needs to be addressed through a concerted, deliberate and continuing process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations, encompassing all organs and bodies concerned in the economic, social and related fields. Such an approach should ensure orderly restructuring and revitalization of the economic, social and related fields and enhance the flexibility and adaptability of the Organization in the performance of its functions, and its ability to address the most urgent tasks and new demands, and should bear in mind the need for an efficient and effective United Nations system to deal with a number of global challenges in the economic, social and related fields in a world of growing interdependence, as well as enhance the interest taken by the international community in the work of the Organization. Thus it would also enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization.

I. Basic principles and guidelines for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

3. The deliberations and decisions of the restructuring and revitalization process should be predicated on the following basic principles and guidelines, in order to ensure a successful outcome:

(a) Restructuring is primarily an intergovernmental responsibility and needs to be pursued in this context. The Secretary-General, in fulfilment of his responsibility as the chief administrative officer of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, is requested to assist and cooperate in this regard;

(b) The process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should be in accordance with the mandate set forth in General Assembly resolution 45/177, the provisions agreed upon at the resumed forty-fifth session of the Assembly, and other relevant resolutions;

(c) Political will is an essential prerequisite for enhancing international cooperation. The socio-economic goals of the United Nations will remain unachievable in the absence of the requisite political will of all States;

(d) The current restructuring and revitalization process should promote the achievement of the objectives and priorities of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields as set forth in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

(e) The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should aim at achieving greater complementarity between the bodies and organs of the United Nations with the General Assembly, while ensuring the latter's position as a principal organ of the United Nations;

(f) The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should preserve the democratic principles which underpin the decision-making process of the United Nations;

(g) Transparency and openness need to be preserved and strengthened in the functioning of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields;

(h) Restructuring and revitalization should be examined and pursued while ensuring the most efficient and effective use of the financial and human resources of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields;

(i) The ongoing process of revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, on the basis of all its relevant resolutions, as appropriate, remains valid.

II. Goals of the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly

4. The reconvened session is a step in the process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields, on the basis of the basic principles and guidelines set out in paragraph 3 of the present annex. The session is aimed at reaching agreement, inter alia, on the role and functioning of the Economic and Social Council in order to:

(a) Enable the Economic and Social Council to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter by enhancing its role as a central forum for major economic, social and related issues and policies and its coordinating functions relating to the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields;

(b) Improve its effectiveness and efficiency in the consideration of and action on the reports of its subsidiary bodies and other relevant reports;

(c) Ensure greater complementarity with the work of the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 60 of the Charter;

(d) Avoid duplication with other organs of the United Nations;

(e) Follow an integrated approach to policy and programme aspects of the economic and social issues.

In addition, the session agreed on the agenda and the timetable for the continuation of the process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, as specified in section IV of the present annex.

III. Measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council

5. The following measures are adopted:

(a) The continued implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly as well as Economic and Social Council resolutions 1988/77 of 29 July 1988, 1989/114 of 28 July 1989, 1990/69 of 27 July 1990 and Council decision 1990/205 of 9 February 1990, as appropriate;

(b) An organizational session not to exceed four days to be held in New York in early February to determine the annual agenda of the Council and related organizational matters, taking into account the relevant provisions of the resolutions and decision mentioned in paragraph 5 (a) of the present annex, particularly on the themes to be discussed in the high-level segment. This session will also select themes for the coordination segment, taking into account, inter alia, the recommendations of the joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. Elections, appointments and confirmations to take place during a resumed organizational session of one or two days at the end of April;

(c) One substantive session of four to five weeks to take place in alternate years in New York and Geneva between May and July;

(d) The substantive session to be broadly organized, sequentially, along the following lines:

High-level segment

(i) A high-level segment of four days open to all Member States in accordance with Article 69 of the Charter, with ministerial participation, devoted to the consideration of one or more major economic and/or social policy themes to be determined at the organizational session, taking into account the Economic and Social Council multi-year work programme; adequate Secretariat preparation, including, in particular, one comprehensive background document for each theme; debate to follow an integrated and interdisciplinary approach; heads of the relevant organizations, agencies and other organs to participate actively;

One-day policy dialogue and discussion on important developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation. In this context, heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions of the United Nations system are invited to participate actively in this dialogue and discussion on matters of mutual interest with a view to building areas of understanding;

The main features of the deliberations of the high-level segment would be presented to the Economic and Social Council by its President in the form of a summary, which would be incorporated in its final report;

The deliberations of the high-level segment would provide political impetus for building areas of convergence and facilitate the consideration of the issues in question, including the emergence of new recommendations on the issues, in the relevant forums.

Coordination segment

(ii) Coordination of the activities of the specialized agencies, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields, in accordance with Articles 63 and 64 of the Charter. This segment will consist of the following:

a. A segment of four to five days devoted to the coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system relating to the achievement of the economic and social objectives of the United Nations. Discussion will be organized around one or more themes selected at the organizational session, and designed to focus attention on the activities of the United Nations system in the selected economic and social areas;

b. Discussion will take into account the report of the Secretary-General as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, together with appropriate recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. This report should contain a system-wide assessment of the status of coordination with regard to the themes and include recommendations, as appropriate;

c. The heads of concerned specialized agencies, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including multilateral financial and trade institutions, are invited to participate actively, making contributions to the policy dialogue reflecting a global perspective on the agreed theme or themes, as well as their activities in the chosen themes;

d. Recommendations which result from these discussions shall be submitted to the General Assembly and forwarded, as appropriate, to the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system as well as to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination. In this context, the Secretary-General should arrange to apprise the next session of the Economic and Social Council of steps taken by the United Nations system to give effect to these recommendations.

Operational activities segment

(iii) A segment of two to three days devoted to operational activities of the United Nations system focusing, in particular, on the follow-up of policy recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly and coordination of operational activities on a system-wide basis, taking account of Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/77. The triennial review would continue to be undertaken by the General Assembly.

Committee segment

(iv) Consideration of specific economic, social and related issues, including their programme implications, in two separate committees meeting simultaneously to consider and take decisions on the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and other relevant reports; a/ these reports should be arranged in

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a/ The meetings of the Economic Committee will begin immediately after the operational activities segment. The work of the Social Committee will begin immediately after the completion of the coordination segment.

clusters, as appropriate, for consideration; discussions to be decision-oriented focusing on specific recommendations and issues and not to involve a general debate. Review and monitoring of the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields. Reports of the committees to be submitted to the plenary Council for approval.

(v) Adoption of the report.

(e) The above measures will come into effect in February 1992.

IV. Issues to be addressed in the future

6. The following non-exclusive list contains issues to be addressed in the future. The agenda and timetable for some further steps will be as follows:

(1) Complementarity between the work of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly

Review at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of ways of enhancing the complementarity between the work of the Economic and Social Council and that of the General Assembly in accordance with Article 60 of the Charter.

(2) Composition of the Economic and Social Council

The process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, undertaken with a view to enhancing its impact and effectiveness, shall include a review of the composition of the Economic and Social Council with due regard to equitable geographical representation and other relevant factors, in order to ensure the most effective participation of Member States, to be undertaken at a resumed forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

(3) Subsidiary machinery in the economic, social and related fields

A review at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, with the objective of possible restructuring and revitalization, and of their reporting responsibilities and procedures with a view to avoiding duplication, where possible. The review should be on the basis of, inter alia, the following criteria:

(a) Ensuring that programme delivery of a subsidiary body meets the needs of Member States and that it is consistent with the goals and priorities of the United Nations in the economic and social fields;

(b) Application of the same basic principles and guidelines for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the subsidiary machinery, as those set out in paragraph 3 of the present annex;

(c) Avoidance of subsuming highly technical functions of subsidiary bodies and expert groups into the Economic and Social Council;

(d) Ensuring that the subsidiary machinery in the economic, social and related fields is able to offer sound recommendations and advice as input into and not a substitute for the consideration and decisions by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General is requested to provide to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session relevant information, including information on the status of subsidiary bodies and their reporting procedures, in order to facilitate the review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly.

(4) Secretariat

A review of the Secretariat structure will be necessary on the basis of the agreements to be reached in the restructuring and revitalization process. In this context, the Secretary-General is requested to review the structure of the Secretariat in the economic, social and related fields, taking into account the outcome of the resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, future work, and other relevant resolutions, as appropriate, and to report thereon with such recommendations as might be appropriate to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

Noting that management of the Secretariat is the responsibility of the Secretary-General, he is requested expeditiously to implement those measures within his purview, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, to streamline Secretariat operations in the economic, social and related fields in order to reinforce the restructuring and revitalization process directed by the General Assembly, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions.

(5) Progress report

The Secretary-General is requested to submit an annual progress report to the General Assembly, starting with its forty-seventh session, on the implementation of the result of the restructuring and revitalization process in the economic, social and related fields, in which he is requested to provide information on any recommendation agreed upon which has not been implemented as scheduled.

(6) Review

As part of the restructuring and revitalization process the implementation of the measures in paragraph 5 above, including all organizational aspects of both the organizational and substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council, will be reviewed at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly in the light of the experience of the reforms agreed upon, with the view to enhancing the impact and effectiveness of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.